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LYONDEL GARDENS

MORGANTOWN
W.VA.



1939

IMPORTANT NOTICE

PLEASE REMEMBER that hybrid seeds do not come true to type. For instance, I cannot guarantee that you will get white delphiniums from seeds that result by crossing together two white varieties; the only assurance I can give you is that the chances of obtaining white delphiniums from such a combination are much greater. Two lavender poppies, or two old rose colored hemerocallis when crossed together will never give you exclusively lavender poppies or old rose colored hemerocallis; they merely accentuate the possibilities of getting such colors. Keep this in mind and you will not have so many disappointments. Much of the attraction of hybrid seeds lies in the delightful surprises that will come to thrill you. If you knew beforehand exactly what you were going to obtain, much of the pleasure of gardening would be lost.

CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

THE MOCKING BIRD imitates the songs of other birds, and the hermit crab appropriates the discarded shells of mollusks. There is something akin between me and these feathered and featherless friends of mine, but whereas they appropriate without improving, I appropriate and endeavor to improve; but unlike many other breeders I do not claim to have created anything; I merely build upon the improved varieties of others. Or maybe I just fool myself into thinking such a thing. Any way, I confess publicly and without blushing that I have appropriated the delphinium strains of Watkin Samuel, Blackmore and Langdon, Major Vanderbilt, the Sage of Hoodacres, and my friend Frank Reinelt of Pacific fame; excellent breeders and gentlemen all who tower high in the world of delphinium. Their fine delphiniums, such as I have been able to secure, have gone through the "melting pot" of Lyondel Gardens and have brought forth a strain which some have called the world's worse, and some the world's best, and which I think is fairly good, with some fine qualities and some poor ones. I am endeavoring to eliminate the poor and to accentuate the best. This task requires neither jealously guarded secrets nor the touch of a wizard. So, my friends, what I am offering to you as Lyondels is not strictly my own; at least no more than any other strain is the exclusive property of any given breeder. Hybridizers depend on each other's products with which to build their own conception of delphinium beauty. Plant improvement is like a relay race: it is advanced by individual breeders who carry the baton for one or more laps but eventually must surrender it to others who come after them. There is credit and profit in it for all. Just as I have introduced into the Lyondels every promising strain that has been developed by breeders all over the world, so have a few others paid me the compliment of introducing the Lyondels into their own strain; still others have regarded the Lyondels with disdain. I salute them all, and may they prosper!

Unlike some breeders I refuse to make exaggerated claims. To tell you that my delphiniums are the best in the world would amount to telling you that I am a better man than all other delphinium breeders in the world, a bald faced statement that would shame me before my own conscience. I would feel like a traitor to many others who have gone before me and to many of my esteemed contemporaries now actively and successfully engaged in the improvement of delphinium. With the high pressure salesmanship now in vogue; with shady business methods masquerading under the term of smart business; with obvious falsehoods dressed up in sales talks to make worms appear like birds of paradise, and with old and discarded types and designs varnished with the glitter of attractive words to make a tottering old man appear like a new born babe, the more intelligent buying public is getting wise, and will no longer accept the word of the man who has something to sell; he must have solid, sane facts. Any way, this breeder of Lyondels who is endeavoring to sell you something, is not going to treat you to sales talk. All he can say truthfully is that every year since he has sold delphiniums most lines of his seeds have been sold out even before the seedpods were ripe. No advertising campaign or nationwide publicity have been the cause of this. My old friends and customers do all the selling for me; their numerous gardens all over the country are miniature Lyondel Gardens for the public to see. By refusing to sell open pollinated seeds, and by crossing only the best, I obtain my small supply of seeds. By continuing my interest in my customers long after the sale is made; by keeping up with the newest developments in delphinium and passing them on to my customers, and by making each year's seed offerings of higher quality than those of previous years I have prevented the Lyondels from going stale and friends of Lyondel from deserting me.

WHAT SORT OF A CUSS IS THIS BREEDER OF LYONDELS?

SOME CUSTOMERS who meet me for the first time are surprised not to find a choleric old man who bites candy and spits lemon juice, but one who is full of life and laughter, is easy to meet and easier to get along with. I have been called the world's biggest crab and of showing too much of a "public be damned" attitude. I insist that only a fool or a very superior person can show such an attitude; I am neither. The world of ours is overrun with fools, but the superior man is yet to be born. All men have clay in more places than their heels, and even the greatest of men rattle some skeletons in the hidden recesses of their souls. An intriguing mixture of superior and inferior traits are all men, only some direct their superiority into becoming great poets, while others go for ditch digging. We could get along without poets but a good ditch digger is a vital necessity. A good poet is usually a very inferior pugilist, and a good ditch digger is a very poor manicurist. So, all of us are superior in some things and inferior in others, the accident of birth, inheritance and opportunities notwithstanding. Therefore I deny that I have ever damned the public. In my dealings with customers I come in contact with all sorts of persons, some of them very trying on any man's blood pressure. If warning away the potential trouble makers and undesirables is showing a "public be damned" attitude, then I am guilty. I don't want to sell seeds to chronic kickers, bargain hunters, self-styled delphinium experts, and careless gardeners. As I can sell all the seeds I produce, I am very particular about those who buy seeds from me. I have dropped many names from my mailing list, but I highly value those I retain. Wealthy and poor, great or humble are treated by me with the same degree of friendliness. I never let a customer down, and no matter how many times he fails with my seeds, I will cheerfully make replacements free of charge until he is satisfied. All I ask of him is be fair with me. Some wonder how I can afford such a thing; but I would rather have one satisfied and steady customer than a score of transients. One dissatisfied customer can do more harm than a dozen satisfied customers can repair. I realize that even the best of gardeners may have occasional failures; if these happen with my seeds some of the good will is bound to enter under a shadow. Hence my offer to replace. However this is not an obligation, nor a part of the sale contract between you and me. Your \$2.50 buys only one packet of seeds and no guarantee whatever. My offer to make replacements is just a friendly gesture and may be withdrawn from those who rub me the wrong way.

THE MONTH OF AUGUST AND YOU

IF THE MONTH OF AUGUST happens to be warm and dry, I will get from you more than my share of cussing because more of you will fail with my seeds; if cool and moist, my ears will not burn so much, but burn they will no matter how viable my seeds or how perfect the season might be because there will always be those who cannot sprout anything, not even a pair of wings in heaven.

Next to air, water is the cheapest thing the gardener has; next to high class seeds and plants, fertilizers are the most expensive things he must buy, yet he will apply fertilizers generously, and water sparingly. Many gardeners know how to spell the scientific names of their flowers, but they don't know how to water their parched plants. They think that to water the surface is to save the interior, whereas in reality they must water the interior to save the surface. Delphinium seeds must have moist and cool seedbed; if you wish to succeed with them, keep the sun out of your seedbed and the water in.

SOWING DIRECTIONS

THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS, if faithfully followed, should bring you success with delphinium seeds: use seed flats instead of cold frame; fill them with a mixture of 2 parts of top soil and 1 part each of sand and peat moss.

One month before sowing the seed, saturate the soil with 5 per cent formalin (5 parts of formalin in 95 parts of water), cover with an inverted empty flat for a day, then expose to the air until dry enough to be worked without caking. Aerate once or twice a day until all odor of formalin is dissipated. This takes at least a month. **Even the smallest amount of formalin in soil is fatal to delphinium seeds.** When ready to sow, level the soil in the flat, make parallel grooves $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep and 3 inches apart, shake the seeds with a pinch of Semesan or Cuprocide, sow in the grooves, cover lightly, then partially plunge the flat in water to allow the moisture to come to the surface of the soil; remove the flat, let the excess water drain off, put the flat in a cool place, preferably the cellar and keep it covered with an inverted empty flat until the seedlings come up in about 10-15 days. Should the surface soil show signs of drying, repeat the watering process. After the seedlings are up remove the inverted flat, knock out its bottom, stretch one thickness of burlap over it, tack down securely and use it to shade the seedlings. Move the flat of seedlings outdoors but away from the direct rays of the sun. Cold frame in a shady location is best for this. Place the flat of seedlings in the cold frame, invert over it the burlap bottom flat, and if necessary, provide additional protection by lath frames. Harden the seedlings gradually. Should signs of damping-off appear, water with 0.25 percent Semesan solution.

If you don't care to fool with soil sterilization, the following method should give you good results: Prepare the soil as before, only fill the flat half full. Plunge it in water until saturated, drain off excess water and place 2 inches of a 50-50 mixture of clean sand and peat moss on the surface of the soil in the flat. Sow as before. Place a layer of cheesecloth on the surface of this mixture and by means of a fine sprinkler water until the sand and peat moss are wet clear through. Do not plunge the flat in water after the seeds are sown because the sand and peat moss mixture may become contaminated by the damping-off fungi forced up from the soil below by the ascending water.

WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT THE LYONDELS?

HAVING BEEN BADLY STUNG time and again, the more intelligent gardeners disregard extravagant claims. They must see for themselves, and sometimes they may even believe what disinterested parties have to say. It is for this reason that every year I have published excerpts from letters written to me by various customers. These serve not only as testimonials, but also as sign posts to gardens where better things are grown and where flower lovers may aggregate to exchange notes.

This year I am opening with the statements of three eminent dynamic delphinium breeders. Frank Reinelt is the new breeder whose Pacific Strain of delphinium is creating so much merited sensation. Prof. Simkhovitch grows delphiniums by the hundred thousand purely for his enjoyment. He not only collects all worth-while delphiniums from every corner of the world, but also breeds his own strain, and has made more advance than anyone else towards the production of fragrant delphiniums. Col. Steichen is one of those rare individuals who can do everything to perfection. His one-man exhibit of delphiniums in New York City took even the most hardened horticulturists by storm and set up a standard of perfection for all other breeders to strive for. These three gentlemen should know their delphiniums, don't you think?

" . . . I did not get acquainted with Mr. Leonian's delphiniums until six years ago. The size of the flowers and the purity of their color made me gasp when the lot from his seed came into bloom, and except for Mr. Barber's whites, I considered his achievement the foremost contribution to the American strain of delphinium."
—Frank Reinelt in the 1938 Yearbook of American Delphinium Society.

Robinston, Maine, July 2, 1938

"In orchid, violet and purple delphiniums you have done wonders. Some of them now in bloom are probably the handsomest plants I have in my garden."—Vladimir G. Simkhovitch.

"... the Lyondel strain . . . I personally consider the most individual creation among hybrid delphiniums available today."—Edward Steichen in the 1938 Yearbook of the American Delphinium Society.

Delphi, Ind., June 6, 1938

"Plants from your seeds proved to be all you claimed for them; they are beautiful. I have blossoms 3¼ inches in diameter; very fine."—Smith's Flower Garden.

Moline, Ill., June 7, 1938

"Your seeds and the delps they produce are the acme of perfection."—H. G. Nygren.

Butler, Pa., June 14, 1938

"For years I have been envious of others in thier possession of better delphiniums. Now, thanks to you, I am the proud possessor of the best."—Charles A. Pride.

Stephens City, Va., June 21, 1938

"Your magnifieent delphiniums have startled my customers more than ever. We can't figure how you develop such wonderful, heavenly things."—Mrs. J. D. Snapp.

New York City, June 22, 1938

"My delphiniums raised from your seeds are now in full bloom. This is the first time I have had the better new delphiniums in my garden, and they are a real joy. The largest spike is on a pure white, and the largest individual flower is a 3 inch lavender."—F. J. Knocke.

Kewanee, Ill., June 22, 1938

"Seedlings from your last year's seeds are blooming now and have provided not only myself but hundreds of visitors with visions of beauty hitherto undreamed of. The plaudits of the multitude were indeed mine."—Dr. F. J. Stewart.

Jackson, Mich., June, 1938

"I simply cannot describe the thrill of my beautiful delphiniums raised from your Connoisseurs Series. The stems are strong and stand without staking."—Beverly Gardens.

Aurora, Ill., June 23, 1938

"I thought that I had a fair show of delphiniums, but after seeing your seedlings in the gardens of others, I got busy and sold plants and flowers in order to make room for yours."—Wm. L. Scheffler.

Youngstown, Ohio, June 29, 1938

"I saw some gorgeous blooms 3½ inches across and on 6 foot spikes grown from your seeds."—John F. Carlson.

Pittsburgh, Pa., June 30, 1938

"I am more than pleased with the seedlings raised from your seed. Some have flowers 3 inches across and are the finest I have seen."—C. H. Boyd.

Wenham, Mass., July 7, 1938

"In January, 1937, I purchased from you four packets of seeds. Germination was practically 100 percent. They began to bloom in July and continued until September. The flowers were the finest I have seen anywhere."—George A. Dill, Supt.

Jersey City, N. J., Sept. 20, 1938

"A few letters in your catalog complain that your seeds do not germinate. The writers of these letters should take a look at a small 2 x 3 cold frame in a corner of my garden. Only one packet of Lyondel seeds was sown there a few weeks ago; it looks like a delphinium lawn! There is only one kind of delphinium that can beat a Lyondel, and that's another Lyondel."—Dr. H. A. Kuhl.

Scappoose, Oregon, July 5, 1938

"I won highest honors and the silver eup with your last year's seed."—Wheeler Seed Company.

Prattsville, N. Y., August 10, 1938

“Anyone who gets two plants from your seed gets more than his money’s worth; and anyone who can’t get two plants from a packet of your seed better quit trying to raise delphinium and try something like corn or beans.”—B. H. Arnold.

Millbrook, N. Y., August 10, 1938

“Most of my plants from your seed were from 6 to 9 feet tall, marvelous and best ever seen in this locality. In fact, growers for the market hearing about them came miles to see them.”—Mrs. W. P. Talbot.

La Grange, Ind., July 26, 1938

“My seedlings from your 1937 seeds are beginning to bloom. Such lovely things! There are new thrills every day.”—Mrs. H. G. Erwin.

Pawtucket, R. I., June 20, 1938

“Out of one packet of your mixed seed I raised 164 plants. I have grown a lot of delphinium from imported and native seed, but neither I, nor any other fan around this section, have ever seen anything to compare with your strain. The flowering spikes are from 38 to 42 inches long, with blooms $2\frac{3}{4}$ to $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches across. Your strain has more high grade plants than any other I have ever seen.”—Nathan Patton.

Pasadena, Calif., June, 1938

“Our 15,000 delphinium plants are creating a widespread comment, but seedlings from your seed nos. 2, 3, 5, and 6 hold visitors absolutely spellbound. No words of mine could express my appreciation to you for such glorious introductions. I intend to give over the greater part of my grounds to your stock.”—Burkard & Cole, Delphinium Growers.

Crafton, Pittsburgh, Pa., May 29, 1938

“I have found your delphinium seed most unusual and have had about perfect germination. You have every reason to be proud of your seeds, as your customers get more than value received.”—Mrs. F. C. Biggert.

Logan, Utah, June 3, 1938

“Each year I feel that I have delphiniums that are good enough for a king, but then when your catalog comes along, the temptation is too great to see what improvement you have made over last year’s production; I just can’t resist. This has happened to me for the past several years because I am really convinced that your seeds can’t be surpassed.”—O. A. Garff.

Lowell, Mich., July 26, 1938

“Your seedlings are now in bloom and I am very much elated over them. THERE ARE SO MANY GOOD SELFS, all of such rare shades!”—E. A. Rush.

Evanston, Ill., July 24, 1938

“I must have more of your seeds. The seedlings that came up and bloomed for me are not only good but pretty near perfect.”—James K. Wunsch.

West Port, Conn.

“The flowers on your seedlings are so wonderful, so large and so varied that they are really gorgeous; and such exquisite whites!”—Ralph V. Sollitt.

Askov, Minn., July 10, 1938

“We have raised delphiniums here for about 20 years but I have never seen anything like the ones from your strain.”—Ferndale Nursery.

Youngstown, Ohio, Jan., 1939

“I have tried delphinium seeds from coast to coast but nothing has in any way approached the Lyondel strain in beauty. The size of flowers is enormous, about 3 inches, and the colorings incredibly lovely.”—Mrs. Charles T. Gaiter.

Nyack, N. Y., Sept. 5, 1938

"Your Connoisseurs Series have always produced for us some very wonderful plants. This summer we had a three-year old that threw up 16 stalks, straight as an arrow and over eight feet in height with flowers over three inches in diameter. This plant survived the terrific thunder-storms and a solid week of rain besides."—Arthur Judson.

Youngstown, Ohio, Feb. 23, 1939

"Your delphiniums have been outstanding with me — much finer than other strains, and I have tried many."—Mrs. Charles B. Gaither.

Towaco, N. J., April 5, 1939

"You really put your own personality into your delphinium. Also I have found, beside their clear coloring and beauty of form, that they do not mildew, nor winter kill easily. I have won blue ribbons with them before, and hope to do it again."—Mrs. Wilbur Jacobus.

SEED OFFERINGS FOR 1939

1. **Light bicolors.** This group of delphiniums is perhaps the best known and the most popular. The greatest advances in the architecture of spikes and of the individual flowers have been made here. Outer sepals are light blue, inners mauve, and eyes with various shades. Here is a color combination hard to surpass.

2. **Dark bicolors.** In every respect the duplicate of the above group except that the colors are much deeper and more intense.

3. **Pure blue self.** During the last few years pure blue delphiniums have made tremendous advances. The colors are clearer, the individual flowers larger, and the spikes much longer, in fact, the longest and the sturdiest spikes will eventually come from this group.

4. **Solid lavender shades.** First distributed by the Lyondel Gardens, this charming group of colors, self lilac, orchid, smoky lavender, mauve, and all intermediate shades, has captured the hearts of all. Matchless in the garden and unsurpassed as cut flowers, these delphiniums should be the pride of every garden.

5. **Solid purple shades.** The companion plants of the above; this group of hybrids contains many shades of self purple that defy description. These are glowing, vivid colors that will gladden any corner of your garden.

6. **Pure whites.** Each passing year finds the whites greatly improved. A clearer quality of white, better spike architecture, larger and more attractive flowers and an all around better constitution make the white delphiniums indispensable in any garden.

7. **Light bicolors x dark bicolors.** Intermediate tones of great charm should result from this cross. Most delphiniums are either too light or too dark because of the constant selection towards these two extremes. This group should supply the much needed medium shades.

8. **Light bicolors x solid lavenders.** This cross should yield a greater diversity of light colors, both selfs and bicolors, and a greater variety of spike form and floral patterns. If past experience is a criterion, this cross should find a wide appeal.

9. **Solid lavender x solid purple.** So many different colors come out of this cross that one finds himself helpless to describe them. This seems to be a wide cross as the seedlings resulting from it show tremendous variation in almost every respect. Some very double, and yet very brilliantly colored flowers — a rather unusual combination — have resulted from this combination, as well as solid and bicolor shades of infinite appeal.

10. **Dark bicolors x solid purples.** Those who want sparkling, vivid colors, should try this group of crosses. Deep and brilliant shades, adequately supported by magnificent spikes and huge flowers will find an immediate appeal.

11. **White x solid purple.** For unusual and rare colors and color combinations this group of crosses should appeal to those who seek something "different". Most of the new and intriguing colors in modern delphinium have come from such a combination.

12. **Mixture of all the foregoing crosses.** Most people are wary of mixtures and seem to be under the impression that the less desirable things are dumped into this common receptacle. I wish to assure my customers that such is not the case here. It takes just as much work to cross pollinate by hand a poor delphinium as it takes to pollenize a good one. Since I have plenty of what I sincerely believe to be good delphiniums, there is no reason for me to do anything underhanded even if I were inclined to do so.

WHEN WILL THE SEEDS BE READY?

BEGINNING with the latter part of July until the end of November there will be seeds harvested almost every day. If you have a very short season you may have the seeds on or about the 15th or 20th of July. If you have not received your seeds by the end of the first week in August, please write to me at once; but not before. If your seeds are not up in about 15 days, let me know at once! I will gladly make replacements, but unless I hear from you soon enough you may find that many lines of my seeds have been sold out.

WHAT IS THE PRICE OF THE SEEDS?

THROUGH prosperity and depression the price has remained the same, \$2.50 per packet of at least a 100 seeds. And if you don't get at least 100 seedlings from each packet, there is something wrong at your end!

PLEASE NOTE: No seedlings or larger plants are offered for sale.

ORIENTAL POPPIES

THERE ARE HUNDREDS of varieties of oriental poppies, mostly ordinary things or mere duplications; new varieties are being turned loose every year with reckless abandon. Why buy such named varieties when you can produce far better things from seeds resulting from carefully controlled cross pollination by hand? After years of breeding and selection I have established a line of oriental poppies, mostly newer shades of pink, the seeds of which will give you a surprisingly large number of pink poppies of huge size and excellent constitution. If you don't know about the magic of newer poppies, their soft, intriguing colors, their matchless splendor, their bold beauty, and their captivating charm; if your concept of poppies is guided by the brick red seedlings, and by the washed out, weak-kneed salmon pinks, you are missing one of the most beautiful shows on earth. Deep maroon and puce, old rose and clear lavender, blood red and deep rose, salmon and apple blossom pink, pure white and blushing white, with all their intergraduations will bring to your garden a color symphony unmatched by any flower.

SEED OFFERINGS

1. Whites and blushing whites.
2. Glowing salmon shades.
3. Clear apple blossom pinks.
4. Rose pinks.
5. Lavender.
6. Deep reds.
7. Mixture of the above shades.

PRICES

FROM NOW ON the price of my poppy seeds will be \$2.50 per packet. You should be able to obtain hundreds of seedlings from each packet. Mix the seeds with fine dirt and sow in outdoor beds. Let them bloom where they are, select the best, discard the rest.

CAUTION: Where summers are cool poppies may be sown in August, otherwise sowing should be delayed until September or early spring.

PLEASE NOTE: No poppy plants or seedlings are offered for sale.

Milwaukee, Wisc., June 8, 1938

"The poppies from your seeds are now in bloom. They average 7 to 10 inches across, mostly pink, some orange, one lavender and no reds. They are entirely in a class by themselves and outdid all the named varieties in my garden."—Dr. E. G. Bruder.

Cincinnati, Ohio, June 7, 1938

"Poppies from your seed gave an unusual number of fine pinks. This is certainly an economical method of getting a number of good pinks together."—C. R. Runyan.

Seattle, Wash., Nov. 1, 1938

"I grew some gorgeous specimens from your poppy seeds."—P. B. Truax.

Carmel, N. Y., July 13, 1938

"My poppies from your seeds amazed the residents in these parts when exhibited in Danbury, Conn. One deep plum colored specimen drew special attention."—Harry J. Maynard.

RED HEMEROCALLIS

NAMED VARIETIES of red hemerocallis are rare and expensive, yet everyone must have red shades because the unending monotony of yellows and oranges creates a yearning for a bold contrast. To such gardeners I bring seeds resulting from cross pollenizing red hemerocallis of fine quality. An amazingly large number of the seedlings will show some shade of red or deep rose, or red generously splashed on a yellow or orange background. Plants up to five feet, flowers up to seven inches across, this new race of hemerocallis is certain to win many admirers.

SEED OFFERINGS

1. Solid reds.
2. Deep rose.
3. Deep maroon.
4. Old rose. (This is very rare and I cannot guarantee seed delivery until after the harvest.)
5. Bicolors. Combinations of yellow, orange or bronze with some shade of red or rose.
6. Mixture of the above.

Some seeds will be ready in August; most of them in September.

PRICE: \$2.50 per packet.

PLEASE NOTE: No plants or seedlings of hemerocallis are offered for sale.

TERMS

Cash with order. No C. O. D. orders accepted.

AMERICAN DELPHINIUM SOCIETY

IF YOU ARE interested in bettering delphiniums as well as your own knowledge about delphiniums, join this up and coming organization. Dues \$2.00 a year. You receive the beautiful and instructive Yearbook of the Society. Write to American Delphinium Society, Ridgefield, Conn.

